

On Track Education Centre (Mildenhall)

82E & F Fred Dannatt Road, Mildenhall, Suffolk IP28 7RD

Inspection dates

7–9 March 2017

| Overall effectiveness | Requires improvement |
|--|--------------------------|
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Requires improvement |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The proprietors do not check the quality of the school's work rigorously. Their involvement in the school's self-evaluation is limited.
- The improvement plan and action plans are not sharp enough to make sure that actions will make a difference to pupils' progress, attendance and behaviour.
- Plans for improvement do not have sufficiently challenging targets for improving teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Records of pupils' behaviour are not detailed enough to provide a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of pupils' personal development.
- Parts of the school accommodation are shabby.
- Leaders' monitoring of teaching does not provide staff with clear feedback on how much pupils have progressed in their learning.

The school has the following strengths

- All of the independent school standards are met.
- Teaching staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils rise to the challenge and achieve well in academic and vocational subjects.
- Staff know pupils very well and supportive relationships help pupils to gain confidence.
- Pupils and parents are highly positive about the school's work and the difference it makes to the children.
- Pupils' attendance rates increase once they settle at the school.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils well and enables them to achieve a range of nationally accredited awards.
- The use of off-site alternative provision and on-site vocational provision are strengths of the school's provision.
- The quality of impartial careers advice and guidance is a notable strength and prepares pupils well for further education.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets all the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership, management and governance by ensuring that:
 - proprietors and trustees hold senior leaders to account rigorously
 - regular monitoring of the independent school standards identifies emerging issues so that weaknesses are dealt with swiftly
 - improvement planning identifies key priorities and clear actions
 - actions in plans are measured rigorously to show the difference made to pupils' academic progress and personal development
 - records of behaviour are suitably detailed and analysed to show the effectiveness of the school's strategies for improving pupils' personal development.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that feedback to teachers consistently identifies how much progress pupils make.
- Make sure that the school accommodation is maintained to a high standard.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- All of the independent school standards are met.
- Leaders discuss what more should be improved and how, but documents, plans for improvement and evaluations lack detail. It is not clear from the documentation how proposed actions would benefit the pupils.
- The school's self-evaluation is not rigorous. There is no detailed analysis of the effectiveness of whole-school provision to inform school improvement planning, which means that the school improvement plan lacks the necessary precision to drive rapid improvement.
- There is significant variation in the monitoring of written records, which reduces accountability for all of the key areas of the school's work.
- Although leaders have not completed a written analysis of the pupil premium spending in order to help plan, monitor and refine actions, the funding has been used well to remove barriers to learning. Providing access to the equipment pupils need in order to gain accreditations, and funding college placements, gives pupils the opportunities they need to make good progress.
- Leaders carefully track the progress made by pupils and, as a result, they have a clear understanding of how well pupils achieve and hold teachers to account for the performance.
- The leadership of learning and the curriculum is clearly a strength. The curriculum is broad and balanced with a range of academic and vocational courses. In addition to the more traditional subjects, pupils study construction, vehicle maintenance, cooking and creative technology programmes on site.
- Leaders prioritise filling the gaps in pupils' previous learning as well as developing their social, communication and life skills. As pupils settle into school, they access a wider range of curricular activities, complementing their interests and resulting in stronger engagement in learning.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils work well in groups as well as individually.
- Pupils have a particularly clear understanding of the principles underpinning democracy through, for example, taking part in elections.
- Pupils learn about the rule of law, for example, by understanding the impact of being arrested. Pupils were able to sensibly discuss their thoughts. Opportunities such as these complement the school's core values and prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders provide regular staff training and development. Staff are positive about the school and responses to the inspection survey clearly indicate that teachers are well-motivated and appreciate the support they receive.
- Communication between the school and parents is regular and informative. Parents are kept fully informed about their child's learning and behaviour through parents' evenings, home visits, phone conversations and meetings to discuss issues as they arise. Parents

receive detailed reports on how well their child is doing in school.

- Parents who spoke to the inspector were very complimentary about how happy and well looked after their children are. Typical examples of parents' views are: 'I cannot sing the school's praises enough. They are fantastic. They are amazing. They listen to me as a parent. My son's grades have gone up leaps and bounds and previously he was crumbling'; 'His academic progress is now so positive. I never thought he would be doing GCSEs'; 'The difference is unbelievable' and 'the school defends the vulnerable and allows them to achieve, breathe and live'.

Governance

- The proprietors do not hold senior leaders to account sufficiently well for all aspects of the school's performance.
- The proprietors have not implemented robust quality assurance systems. They cannot tell when important aspects of the school's work, for example, the monitoring of the independent school standards, the school improvement plan and other recorded documentation, are not completed effectively.
- Some areas of the school building are not maintained to a high standard. Some areas are in a poor state of repair.
- All statutory policies are in place and are reviewed regularly by the proprietors.
- The proprietors strongly support the ethos of the school. They are passionate about giving pupils the best possible education and care, to develop the pupils into confident and independent adults.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The safeguarding policy is available on the school website and meets the most recent guidance.
- Senior staff follow safer recruitment practices when employing new staff. All staff have been subject to stringent pre-employment checks. The checks are accurately recorded in the single central record.
- Staff complete online training and receive regular updates on how to keep children safe. Staff are knowledgeable about the additional vulnerabilities of the pupils in this school and know who to talk to if they have concerns.
- Named officers for child protection, first aid and fire evacuation are in place and fulfil their responsibilities diligently.
- High levels of supervision ensure that pupils are safe and their welfare is promoted.
- The school works closely with parents, and the alternative providers, when pupils take part in activities beyond the school site to make sure that they attend well and behave well.
- The curriculum is planned well to promote personal safety. Pupils receive detailed advice on how to keep themselves safe and know who to talk to if they have concerns. Pupils are particularly well supported to keep safe online and when using social media. As one

pupil stated, 'we are safe online as we get taught it often in different subjects.'

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The good quality of teaching in academic and vocational subjects enables pupils to make good progress in their learning. Teachers have an accurate view of what pupils can do and have high expectations of what they can achieve.
- Teachers plan work that interests and engages pupils. Plans are personalised to each pupil ensuring that they have appropriate work that challenges them. The activities and work motivate pupils to focus and want to learn more. For many pupils this has been the first time they have ever experienced success in learning.
- Pupils have good relationships with their teachers, which gives them the confidence to ask questions and not be afraid to make mistakes.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and show great skill when questioning pupils about the learning. They ensure that pupils gain deeper understanding as lessons unfold, such as in an English lesson, where pupils were questioned effectively by the teacher to check their understanding about International Women's Day and to help them reach a measured conclusion.
- Teachers give continuous verbal feedback, which enables pupils to make good progress. Good-quality feedback was seen in a vocational lesson where a pupil was learning about bricklaying and the teacher corrected the technique in order to improve it.
- Pupils very often start with reading ages below those expected for their age. A one-to-one support programme helps them to make good progress in developing their reading skills. Pupils are encouraged to read in class with appropriately challenging reading materials.
- Support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. All pupils are provided with their own personal learning plan which prepares them for adult life. The plan commences on admission with an assessment of key skills, carried out by their key worker. Teachers set tasks that are at the right level and carefully monitor pupils' progress. Those requiring additional help receive additional one-to-one support.
- The most able pupils are challenged well because work is closely matched to their needs. This challenge was seen in a mathematics lesson where learning was tailored to help pupils think more deeply and apply what was known in a range of ways, when answering GCSE examination questions.
- Vocational teaching is strong. Pupils are fully engaged in their learning, achieving relevant qualifications. Pupils enter classrooms and workrooms safely and calmly due to well-established routines. The learning environment is welcoming and encourages pupils to participate fully.
- Activities in the nurture room help pupils to behave appropriately, develop their social skills, improve self-esteem and develop confidence in themselves as learners. Pupils value the support they get and resettle to learning successfully.
- Rewards are given for timekeeping, politeness, hard work and teamwork. The rewards are valued by pupils and parents. One parent stated to the inspector, 'it's so nice to

receive positive information about my son now as I used to get nothing but negative.'

- Sanctions are dealt with on an individual basis through positive reinforcement. Pupils, when asked by the inspector, were fully aware of what actions are disapproved of.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils with fractured or unsuccessful previous experiences of school now come to learn and enjoy their education. Pupils talk of being 'wanted', 'appreciated' and 'given a second chance'. They quickly build relationships with staff because they know that they are valued and respected.
- Pupils feel safe and are confident in talking to staff about any anxieties or worries. One pupil commented, 'we meet once a week and have support talking through any problems about behaviour and our learning and get praise as well. I have settled in very happily.'
- Pupils show impressive gains in confidence and self-esteem, such that by the time they are in Year 11 they are talking optimistically about the future.
- Pupils value the careers guidance they are given. One pupil told the inspector, 'we are taught how to do a CV, and how to do job and college applications. We are given good information and guidance.' An ex-pupil stated, 'I never thought I would get to this point in my life where I am going to college. I have changed so much since being there.'
- Extra-curricular activities support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The pupils have visited The Royal National Theatre, the Science Museum, the History Museum, the London Dungeons and The London Eye. Pupils take what they have learned from these activities and incorporate it into what they are doing at school. These trips, alongside outdoor activities such as assault courses and caving, provide unforgettable experiences for the pupils.
- A small proportion of pupils attend alternative provision, which meets their individual needs well. The quality of the provision and pupils' outcomes are well monitored by staff. Pupils attend regularly and achieve a range of external accreditations. Any concerns are communicated immediately to the school.
- The school site is secure and supervised well. There is no graffiti or litter around the school. Pupils take good care of the newest parts of the school and stated they would value other areas being developed to the same standard.
- All staff have current first aid training. Detailed risk assessments are carried out for activities in school and when children go on visits away from the school site.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The behaviour policy is followed consistently well, and there are procedures and systems in place to promote good behaviour through rewards and sanctions.
- Pupils' attitudes to academic and vocational learning, as well as behaviour around the

school, are positive. Pupils show resilience when staff challenge or insist on modifying their behaviour.

- Pupils have an appropriate understanding of the different types of bullying and are confident that it would not be tolerated at the school.
- The pupils say that they enjoy coming to school. They admit that it is the first time they have ever said this. One pupil commented, 'it's not the usual type of school but works better. I feel a lot more welcome here. They like to see you turn up to school.'
- The friendly, welcoming atmosphere at the school helps the pupils to settle in quickly and become part of the community. Pupils are treated respectfully, and respond well to the staff, who are good role models. Pupils commented, 'we are like a big family, staff and pupils, and we have settled in very happily.'
- Behaviour at the two alternative providers is good. Regular communication with the providers supports pupils to manage their behaviour well in different learning environments.
- Any poor behaviour is dealt with quickly and effectively. Staff deal with incidents skilfully and sensitively in order to move learning forward.
- The school retains up-to-date attendance and admission registers. Attendance is monitored on a pupil-by-pupil basis. Parents note that attendance has been an issue in the past at previous schools but has now improved considerably.
- Staff are working closely with individual pupils, offering a bespoke curriculum, in order to fully engage them in their learning and improve attendance. This approach also works well for pupils at risk of exclusion, although the number of fixed-term exclusions, mainly for breakages, remains high for some pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The school prepares pupils well for the next stage in their education. When pupils join the school, they have low levels of attainment and poor behaviour. By the time they leave school at the end of Year 11, pupils have good attitudes to learning and have gained a range of nationally recognised qualifications.
- Pupils make consistently good progress in their academic and personal skills, across a range of subjects, not just in English and mathematics.
- Pupils' achievements are moderated and records show that there is no difference between the progress made by different groups of pupils.
- Pupils achieve well in a wide range of external accreditations, such as GCSEs in English, mathematics, science, art and design, humanities, general studies, and information and communication technology.
- A range of Assessment and Qualification Alliance (AQA) module units are completed by all pupils, appropriate to their ability.
- Pupils gain level 1 and 2 functional skills qualifications in English, mathematics, and information and communication technology, which represents good progress from individuals' starting points.
- Pupils attending the alternative provisions are making good progress and enjoy the

courses they are studying.

- Last year, all pupils were successful in obtaining places at their preferred college. They aspire to succeed at college and take good advantage of the personalised guidance provided about the further education opportunities available to them.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 127003 |
| DfE registration number | 935/6083 |
| Inspection number | 10006012 |

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

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| Type of school | Other Independent Special School |
| School category | Independent school |
| Age range of pupils | 11 to 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 22 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 1 |
| Proprietor | On Track Education Services Limited |
| Chairs | Jane Cox, Jan Grayson, Penny Harris |
| Headteacher | David Younger |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £35,606 |
| Telephone number | 01638 715555 |
| Website | www.ontrackeducationservices.co.uk |
| Email address | dyounger@ontrackeducation.com |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- On Track Education Centre (Mildenhall) is an independent day special school, which opened in April 2005.
- On Track Education Services Limited runs the school. The proprietors provide the governance of the school.
- The school is registered for up to 32 pupils, aged between 11 and 18 years, who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, and autism.
- Nineteen pupils have statements of special educational needs or education, health and

care plans. Pupils are placed at the school by local authorities.

- The school uses West Suffolk College and St Edmunds Society, Norwich for alternative provision.
- Although registered for pupils to the age of 18, there have been no pupils in the sixth form for the past three years because pupils go on to college. The proprietor is considering a change to the school's registration, to have key stage 3 and key stage 4 pupils only.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning across a range of year groups and subjects.
- The inspector looked at a range of pupils' books to focus on progress made over time.
- The inspector scrutinised the school's self-evaluation summary; the school improvement plan; policies; information on progress; records of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; and information on pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector reviewed the checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children.
- The inspector spoke to pupils in lessons, and met with them more formally to gather their views about the school.
- The inspector scrutinised policies, procedures and records in order to check the school's compliance with the independent school standards.
- The inspector considered the 14 survey responses completed by staff while the inspection was underway.
- The inspector took account of three Parent View responses and three phone calls made to parents.
- The school's website was examined.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, the head of learning and curriculum, and a proprietor.

Inspection team

Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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